

ABSTRACT

DISSERTATION PROJECT: An Evaluative Measure for Outputs in Student-Run Public

Relations Firms and Applied Courses

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A valid, reliable survey instrument was created to be used by public relations student-run firms and other applied public relations courses to gauge client satisfaction. A series of focus groups and pilot tests were conducted to ascertain themes, refine questions, and then to refine the entire instrument. Six constructs to be measured, including strategies used by the students, project management, communication tools, professional demeanor, communication skills, and overall effectiveness, emerged as themes needing to be assessed. The final instrument included 40 scale questions, six follow-up questions (one for each set of scale questions), and four open-ended questions. As an outputs evaluation within General Systems Theory, this evaluative tool provides a feedback loop that did not exist prior for public relations applied courses and student-run firms. This survey, when used by public relations educators, will provide a standardized tool from which discussions can ensue and pedagogy may advance.

Keywords: public relations, public relations education, survey instrument, evaluation